NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0726 MAY 6, 1976
DON FRANKLIN/BONN

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MEET

ANNCR:

THE NEWLY-FOUNDED UNION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IS HOLDING A TWO-DAY MEETING IN ROME. IN BONN, DON FRANKLIN SPOKE WITH WEST GERMANYS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFERENCE BEFORE HE DEPARTED FOR THE ITALIAN CAPITAL.....

VOICE:

THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION WAS FOUNDED LAST MONTH AT A MEETING IN BRUSSELS, AND THE ROME CONFERENCE IS THE ORGANIZATIONS FIRST REAL WORKING SESSION. THE UNION WAS ESTABLISHED IN RESPONSE TO THE REGULAR CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS HELD BY THE COMMUNITY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. (OPT) THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION IS TO COORDINATE CONSERVATIVE POLICIES IN EUROPE AND, AS THEY PUT IT, TO COORDINATE EFFORTS TO KEEP LEFTIST IDEOLOGIES FROM TAKING OVER THE ENTIRE CONTINENT. (END OPT)

BEFORE HE DEPARTED FOR THE CONFERENCE, EYE ASKED THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF WEST GERMANY'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, PROF. KURT BIEDENKOPF, IF IT IS A COINCIDENCE THAT THE MEETING IS BEING HELD IN ITALY JUST AS THAT COUNTRY IS PREPARING FOR ELECTIONS WHICH MAY BRING COMMUNISTS INTO THE GOVERNMENT.

<u>TAPE: CUT ONE -- BIEDENKOPF</u>

"WE HAD BEEN PLANNING A MEETING BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES UNION AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ITALY FOR SOMETIME. THE FACT THAT I AM GOING THERE TO TAKE PART IN THE MEETING, OF COURSE, HAS

SOMETHING TO DO WITH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALY. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND I'D LIKE TO GET SOME FIRST-HAND INFORMATION BY TALKING TO OUR ITALIAN FRIENDS ON WHAT THE SITUATION IS."

VOICE:

HERE IN WEST GERMANY, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRY CAN REALLY AFFORD TO HAVE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN ITS GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY A WIDELY-DISCUSSED TOPIC. EYE ASKED MR. BIEDENKOPF WHY HIS PARTY IS SO CONCERNED.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- BIEDENKOPF

"OUR ENERGIES MUST BE CONCENTRATED NOW ON PRESERVING THE BASIS OF POLITICAL CONSENSUS AMONG THE EUROPEAN PARTIES ON WHICH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY RESTS, AND WHATEVER HELP WE CAN RENDER IN THIS SITUATION, WE MUST RENDER...WE FEEL THAT A COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD CHANGE THE QUALITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT AND A CHANGE OF QUALITY OF THE GOVERNMENT, OF ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, CANNOT REMAIN WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR POLICY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY."

VOICE:

PROF. BIEDENKOPF REJECTED THE IDEA THAT RECENT HISTORY PROVES THAT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT IS QUITE MANAGEABLE. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN LISBON THE COMMUNISTS SHARING OF POWER CAME DURING A PERIOD IN WHICH PORTUGAL WAS NOT REALLY AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF NATO, AND THAT ICELAND -- WHICH AT ONE TIME HAD COMMUNISTS IN ITS GOVERNMENT -- CAN HARDLY BE COMPARED IN SIZE OR POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO ITALY.

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